United Nations ST/IC/2009/19

Secretariat

21 April 2009

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters in 2009, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998. **Immediate vacancies are expected in the Interpretation Service in Nairobi**.

2. A competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters will tentatively be held on **20 and 21 October 2009** in New York, Geneva and other locations, according to the number and location of qualified applicants invited to take the examination and the availability of necessary technical equipment. The purpose of the examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic-language interpreters will be filled.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as to qualified external applicants. Staff members of subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or a special mission are considered external applicants for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who are successful and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Arabic-language interpreter posts as they occur. Successful candidates will be offered new appointments with the United Nations, subject to normal United Nations Secretariat recruitment procedures and standards. **Successful candidates will be expected to take up their functions as required by the needs of the Organization, specifically in the duty stations where vacancies are located**. Assignments are subject to rotation, and interpreters may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Interpreters are expected to serve **a minimum of five years** in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2010.

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selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 to 14 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have a perfect command of Arabic, which is normally expected to be their main language;[1]

(b) Have an excellent knowledge of English or French. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that applicants' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status file. For this purpose, staff members should attach to their application either a photocopy of a diploma or certificate from a language school or a brief explanation in their P.11 or Personal History Profile (PHP) form of how they acquired their claimed knowledge of the language. Staff members are advised to submit photocopies, not originals, of such documentation. Applicants may be required to submit evidence of degrees, knowledge of languages and/or relevant experience prior to convocation;

(c) Hold a university degree from a recognized school of interpretation in which at least one full academic year is devoted to interpretation. Alternatively, applicants must hold a degree from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Arabic is the language of instruction, and have 200 days of work experience as conference interpreters and/or work experience in the fields of translation, editing, verbatim reporting or other related fields. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, admit an applicant graduating from a university at which the principal language of instruction is a language other than Arabic, provided that he or she has adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language is Arabic.

5. The requirement for a university degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) above may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

6. In order to meet the Organization's needs to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who have reached the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications, 17 July 2009, will not be admitted to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. If a large number of applications is received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified applicants, based on a review of qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4 above. All applicants will be

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the applicant is best able to interpret. Applicants' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status file.

notified of the Board's decision in respect to their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

8. For examinees with an excellent command of English and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in English (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into English from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

9. For examinees with an excellent command of French and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in French (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into French from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

10. On the basis of the results of this examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected examinees to a competency-based interview. The Board will interview each examinee to assess whether he or she possesses the competencies required for the position and the willingness to serve at any duty station, adaptability to the prevailing working conditions in the Arabic Interpretation Section and, in particular, the ability to work as a member of a team. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, examinees who are invited for an interview should **not** assume that they will be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. When vacancies occur in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster, subject to the priority vacancy requirements of the Organization. All examinees admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores or results.

12. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are expected to accept it.

13. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be recruited as Arabic-language interpreters according to the staff rules in force.

14. In order to service meetings of the General Assembly or the Security Council, interpreters are often called upon to work outside of normal working hours, including on weekends and holidays.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, together with a copy of their P.11 or PHP, **no later than 17 July 2009**, to:

2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters
Examinations and Tests Section
Strategic Planning and Staffing Division
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575 A
United Nations Secretariat
New York, NY 10017
Fax No.: 1-212-963-3683
e-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

16. Applications may be sent by e-mail, facsimile or mail. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early, preferably, by e-mail or facsimile, rather than through the mail.

17. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to send their applications directly to the Examinations and Tests Section, through the chief administrative officer or director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations by 17 July 2009, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section.

18. Applications that are incomplete (without the P.11 or PHP form and the language diplomas, if required) or are received after the above deadline will not be considered.

Application for staff members only

2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/Office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax No. _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s)? _____

What is your main language?[1] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 form or, preferably, a PHP form, and attach it to this application. Describe your work experience, giving dates and length of time and the organization for which you have worked as an Arabic-language interpreter, translator, editor or verbatim reporter.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Which examination are you applying for:

Arabic and French ☐ **Arabic and English** ☐

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I have read information circular ST/IC/2009/19 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2009 competitive examination for Arabic-language interpreters and am recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic-language interpreter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 3 and 12 to 14.

Date _____ Signature _____

(When applying by e-mail, type the date and your name above)